

## INTRODUCTION

The Regulator movement is a familiar theme in the history of North Carolina and needs no extensive description or comment. It was an organization of protest formed in the western counties in 1768 against the character of the local administration, which finally resulted in revolt. Its background was the scarcity of money, the incidence of taxation, and the land policy of the Granville District.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the Regulation there was the Sandy Creek Association of 1766, and earlier than this were two protests in Granville County, one sponsored by Reuben Searcy, the other the work of George Sims.

*The Petition of Reuben Searcy and Others* was presented to the County Court of Granville on March 23, 1759. The burden of its complaint is the conduct of Robert (Robin) Jones Jr., Attorney General of North Carolina, in that his fees were extortionate and that he had prevented the appointment of justices of the peace for the upper part of Granville. The fee question was nothing new; it was chronic throughout the colonial period and was one of the leading complaints of the Regulators. Regarding the appointment of justices, the facts were as follows: In 1765 the justices commissioned for Granville refused to serve because the name of Robert Harris had been stricken from the list of nominees, and upon investigation by Jones they declared that the entire list must be purged. Thereupon Jones recommended to the Governor and Council that fourteen out of the twenty-three appointees be dropped and that six new names be added to the list; in this manner the upper part of the county was slighted.

Developments following the Searcy petition were full of interest. It is probable that Searcy was prosecuted for libel, but there is no record of such action.<sup>2</sup> By the following May the trend of events made Jones exceedingly unpopular. This was due to the Enfield riot and its consequences. In November 1758 certain groups of people, dissatisfied with the excessive fees and the general maladministration in the land office of Earl Granville, petitioned the Assembly for redress. Although there was an investigation, which ultimately led to the dismissal of Francis Corbin, Granville's agent, the only im-

<sup>1</sup> See the standard discussion by Bassett, J. S., *The Regulators of North Carolina (Annual Report, American Historical Association, 1894, pp. 141-312)*.

<sup>2</sup> Hermon Husband, *Impartial Relation*, etc., p. 9.